

# THE COLUMBIAN OBSERVER.

A JOURNAL OF  
LITERATURE AND POLITICS.

"THE task of an author is, either to teach what is not known or to recommend known truths by his manner of adorning them."  
Dr. Johnson.

"Citizens by birth or choice, of a common country, that country has a right to concentrate your affections. The name of AMERICAN, which belongs to you, in your national capacity, must always exalt the just pride of patriotism."

Washington's Farewell Letter.

VOL. I.

PHILADELPHIA, SATURDAY, MAY 4, 1822.

No. 5.

## THE AUTHOR OF THE WAVERLY NOVELS.

Numerous attempts have been made to trace to his covert, the unknown author of the new school of Dramatic and Historical Novel Writing; but hitherto without success. It is natural that curiosity should be strongly excited, to discover a fact, which appears to be studiously concealed; but it is difficult to ascertain what benefit could flow from the dissipation of the mystery, were it even practicable to unravel it. The knowledge of the author, could not enhance but would perhaps lessen, the pleasure of the reader; neither could his name on the title page, add one ray of beauty to his singular productions. The attempt, therefore, is to be considered, only as an evidence, of the restlessness of mankind; who are burning with impatience to discover, what when revealed, will consign them over to frigid indifference, and an extreme of torpor, the complete contrast to their present enthusiasm.

The public anxiety upon this subject, has led the admirers of Mr. Walter Scott, to fix upon his brows, the gorgeous diadem of Romance, on the presumption of his being the real author of the Waverly Novels. Their conjecture is supported by a long chain of literary coincidences, and intellectual resemblances, which to those, who are not his avowed, enthusiastic admirers, carry so little weight with them, as to excite a smile, at their serious and earnest credulity. We have examined this long roll of proof presumptive, with an impartial attention; but at the same time, with a thorough conviction, that the inquiry, even if successful, was without profit, pleasure, or improvement. The evidence, appears to us exceedingly frivolous, as evidence; and consequently, as inconclusive, as it is flippant. In the light of a literary production, however, *The Eight Letters to Richard Heber, Esq.* are uncommonly fanciful, elegant, and sprightly. But the writer has evidently laboured under an extravagant passion for Mr. Scott, that has wholly discoloured his perceptions, unsettled his judgment, and magnified into magical dimensions, every trivial circumstance connected with the *Poet of Marmion*, who seems emphatically to be, *the god of his idolatry*. The coincidences, so minutely detailed in those Eight Letters, must appear to every sober and dispassionate mind, to border altogether upon the ridiculous; while some of them, totter and lisp in such absolute puerility, as to expose them to a feeling, not very dissimilar to contempt. That Mr. Scott

is fond of the chase; that the Author of Waverly also delights to describe it; that he loves to paint battles, and that Mr. Scott is likewise fond of the same task; that the one uses the same words as the other, to describe the sensations of a man going to the gallows;—that they both bring their villains to the same sort of death; that they both are enamoured of "*long and deep draughts of mighty wine*;" that they both delight in dogs; and to carry on the coincidences, in the same rational and dignified style, let us add that they both love *Venison*, and take pleasure in the society of *women*; are both fond of a *joke*; and neither of them dislike a *song*; that both cling to the superstitions of their common country; that both are familiar with localities, of which they would justly be ashamed to be ignorant; that both write in *English*; both worship the same *God*, and both were born of *woman*, and both must return to the dust of the valley,—therefore, we sapient and grave Critics infer—the *Poet of Marmion*, to be, the author of the *Waverly Novels*!

To track a writer, through the endless windings, and boundless paths of Literature, is an arduous and fruitless task; especially when the object in view, is to demonstrate an abortive Poet to be the author of prose compositions! The coincidences and resemblances adduced by the writer of the Letters are too general, and too feeble, to command respect, or belief. Poetry and Prose, are too essentially distinct, to admit of a comparison of powers, much less of style, metaphors, and language, that will convict the author of a Novel, to be the writer of a Poem! If the *powers*, manifested in the Poems of Scott, however, are to decide the question, whether he be the author of the *Waverly Novels*; the inference, in our judgment, is direct against him. His Ballads, and all his poems are but Ballads, deficient in substance, vicious in Taste, and short-lived in popularity, evince no genius, competent to the production of the *Waverly Novels*.—It is true, we are among those old fashioned critics, who worship at the shrine of Dryden, Shakespear, Pope, Addison, Goldsmith, and Savage, in the ancient heroic measure of English verse.—This circumstance, we apprehend, does not wholly disqualify us, from sitting in judgment, on such pseudo-poets, as Scott.—We do not solicit the suffrage of the author of *Jokeby*, to confirm us in the opinion, that the ballad poems of that gentleman, give no manifestation of that *stupendous* genius, competent to create the Novels of Waverly.

Still, however, it is far from impossible, that Scott may be their author. A writer who fails in Poetry, may succeed transcendently well in prose; and as Scott was literally beaten, by the just weapons of the Critics, from the bowers of the Muses, which he had profaned with impious step; it is highly probable he may have taken refuge in a department of Literature, at that time, *more humble* in his opinion, because ignorant of the distinguished fame to which they were destined to rise.—Yet this is far from awarding to Scott, the brilliant wreath of the Historical Novelist; for the same probabilities would apply to every other disappointed Poet; and what a myriad of abortive Bards, were hooted from the public stage, at the same time, in his illustrious company, no one is ignorant.

Whatever is the fashion, or the rage, is always overrated. We have ever estimated the Novels of *Waverly*, as extraordinary and splendid productions, disfigured, however, by a barbarous dialect, and impure style, a style not English; we have devoured them with avidity; we have profited by their perusal; we still admire them, and still read them with increased zest.—Yet we pronounce them to be overrated, from the force of fashion, and the mystery of concealed authorship. That they possess merit of an imperishable character, we readily allow; but as Novels, (and as Novels only can they ever lay claim to consideration,) they are not entitled to that immensity of applause, which has been poured so prodigally upon them.—As an illustration of our meaning, and also of the force of that fashion, which gives adventitious celebrity to new performances, we may refer to the Novels of Richardson, once equally as much the subject of praise and admiration; now forgotten, and consigned to cobwebs and to dust. The same effulgence of Fame, also once encircled the immortal Romances of Fielding; but both those classical writers, have now settled down into that sobriety of praise, which judgment, not fashion, awards them. The time, we predict, is not far distant, when this too, must be the fate of *Waverly*, as inevitably as Death terminates the career of man.

At present, our opinion is decidedly against the presumption of Scott being their author. Notwithstanding all that has been said to the contrary, we can discover in the conjecture, no verisimilitude whatever; the powers of Scott as exhibited in his poems, and those of the author of the Novels, being of a character wholly opposite and distinct.—There is an energy, an all grasping power of mind, in the writer of *Waverly*, which presents a perfect contrast, to the amiable impotence of the Scotch Poet. We do not wish to drag the reader through a tedious series of illustrations, merely to show the opinion not to be absurd. To demonstrate our impressions, to be tantamount to a *fact*, we do not attempt, as those have done, who argue in favour of Scott's authorship, but argue in vain. We state it as an impression only, that two distinct individuals, have written the Novels, and the Poems. If we should prove, hereafter, to have reasoned fallaciously, we can only say in defence of our sagacity, that the Novelist in prose, has more completely succeeded, in *disguising* the Poet in rhyme, than in concealing his identity. When we even compare the scraps of poetry, interspersed throughout the Novels, with the ballads of Mr. Scott, we can discover no traces of the same fancy, or the same taste.

There is one circumstance adduced in support of the

presumption of Scott, being the author, which in our opinion bears immediately against the hypothesis—that Scott receives the money for the copy right, without any care at concealment. Such conduct is not that of the *real* author, solicitous of mystery. Were he the writer, he would *avow it*, prior to such an implied declaration.—We take this of itself, to be conclusive against the presumption in respect to him. A stronger, if there can be a stronger proof however, exists, in this—that being an object of vigilant observation to the public, having much notoriety of character, and bringing on himself, by this bare suspicion, the fixed attention of so many persons; they should, for so long a period, have failed to remark in him, that seclusion in study, and that labour of composition, which the author, whoever he be and however mighty his genius, could not possibly dispense with. As to the recent Knighthood of the Poet, we do not believe, that fatuous as George the fourth is in understanding, and debauched equally in mind, principle, and person, he would feel that love and reverence for genius and literature, which would induce him to grant a title of nobility to an author, purely as a reward for his literary productions. But if it was a distinction for literary attainments, why single out Mr. Scott for an honour, which in justice should have been conferred, on the *highest* literary powers? If he was the writer, he never would have affected concealment, after receiving from the gracious hands of debauched majesty, that ridiculous title. A title for a *Poet*! And worst of all, a title for a *Novel Writer*! For ourselves, we absolutely reject the hypothesis, as visionary and improbable.

#### POLITICAL.

##### THE NEXT PRESIDENT.

GENERAL Jackson is said to have been nominated, by the people of Tennessee, a candidate for the Presidency: We rejoice exceedingly to hear of it; and heartily wish him the support of a People, who ought to be bound to him, in links of eternal gratitude. As the preserver of the country, in a moment of dark and imminent peril during the last war, he deserves, at the hands of that country, whatever she has power to bestow on him. Here is a candidate, against whom no man can clamour. And if the proverbial ingratitude of Republics, is not destined to blast our fame, we may expect him to succeed, as he deserves to.—But we fear his honesty, his independence, his patriotism, his genius, and his towering sternness of Republican Virtue; will muster a host of Corruptionists to oppose his election. Venality will shrink from him; weakness fear him; corruption shudder at his prospect of success. How must such pigmies as Adams and Crawford, tremble to hear the *name* of *Jackson*, in the lists against them: a name, at whose sound the country should rise in a mass, to elevate him to the Presidential Chair. And let the People of Pennsylvania remember, amidst all the noise and din of other Candidates, that *Jackson has claims on them*, which they never can shuffle off, but with ingratitude and loss of character.—As to his *competency*, who shall venture to question, what has never yet failed him, and never yet been questioned? For ourselves, we boldly proclaim, *let this be the man*. We want a man from the pure air



of the Western plains; from the western side of the mountains: A man free from the pollution of the politics and intrigues of the Capital. One who will act for the *country*, in spite of the arts of caballers; and preserve the Constitution, at every peril. Such a one we know Jackson to be. Let the people bear in mind, his virtues and his services, and they will not, cannot refuse him their support.

Upon this subject, of the next President, we observe that our sentiments have already been industriously misrepresented. The epithet demagogues, has never been applied by us to the Candidates for the Presidency, but to those who with premature haste and zeal, have volunteered to recruit in their service. We expect, and shall feel proud of the revilings and misrepresentations of a certain class of editors and politicians, who have never ventured beyond the leading-strings of dependence, and the stale routine of worship to the reigning dynasty. For ourselves we have no *faith* in mortals, entrusted with great authority and power; much less are we disposed to create *Idols* from clay, and fall down and worship what we know to be corruption. Wherever there is temptation to abuse trust, (and wherever there is power, this temptation exists) we shall ever keep our vigilance awake; our enquiry alert, our judgment unbiased. The observance of the Constitution, and the good of the people, are the only controlling principles of our political creed.—Courtesy shall never disarm us of the weapon of truth. Those who cry out “courtesy, gentlemen, courtesy—come, come, be gentle, be gentle”—are the stricken deer, whom Truth galls; they are the *galled jades who wince* at every motion of enquiry, or argument. Such men are scarcely fit for the Court of *Castlereagh*; for even his *Majesty* occasionally receives a *brush* from this troublesome weapon of *Truth*; whom the corruptionists here are so anxious to get rid of: Perhaps these courteous knights so sweetly perfumed, so full of bows, compliments, and kind words, *meaning nothing*, would have no aversion to muster their *musky* politicians within the *ten miles square of the Capital*, and then—reduce the rest of the nation to the condition of *Ireland*, without the liberty of speaking, writing, or breathing. But perhaps this is an extreme case. Even their *politeness* would hinder them from going to such an extremity. However this may be, we assure the *gentle creatures* who feel so shocked at our rough and bold tone, that we have too much affection for Liberty, too much reverence for the Constitution, and too much regard to popular rights and happiness to smother, or suppress, one feeling, or one remark, which we think will tend to the health of the country, or the conservation of freedom. The times are *over civil*; and a little roughness, in a good cause, will be salutary. If the people would so far comply with the customs of the Asiatics, as to *beat their Idols* occasionally, it would be better for them, and perhaps better for their godships.

—  
JOHN RANDOLPH.

It seems the eulogy we bestowed upon the patriotism and talents of this gentleman, has, as was to have been anticipated, given much offence to the corruptionists. This we take to be the best corroboration of the truth of our portrait, as well as his merits. The slang of the court worshippers is, “where has he ever given evidence of being a statesman?”

What measures has he ever projected? What good has he ever advocated; what system ever matured?” We would imagine such questions to be addressed to a *great minister in power*, or to a President of the United States, who wielded the destinies of the nation. But no—they are questions put to a man, who was never even in *favour at Court*, except during a short period of Mr. Jefferson’s administration, when he gave every evidence of talents, which a statesman could display. Had Mr. Randolph the mind of a God, what measures of *reform*, (for he could propose no others consistently with his patriotism:) would be listened to, by the Idolaters in Congress? His political posture, is by necessity—that of an *opposition member*. Where, we may ask, was the evidence of Fox being a statesman, when in opposition but in his speeches; the brilliant manifestations of his political wisdom, sagacity, and foresight? Both Burke and Fox, were deeply censured for the same defect before they came into office. Yet when in power, who gave more transcendent demonstrations of the superior powers of great statesmen?—Let Mr. Randolph possess a fair occasion for the display of his abilities, before his practical powers are derided. Would you have him *usurp* the duties of the President and his Secretaries; and his reward to be—proscription? This suggestion against him therefore is almost fatuous. It is not denied that his genius is eccentric, and rather too erratic and desultory; but this is a fault of excellence; it is a shade that shows his talents in fuller relief; for without the eccentricity we should not possess his genius. We must estimate him to judge of him fairly on the whole; not fasten with petty hostility, upon a characteristic trait of genius, to disparage that genius.—His abilities are great enough for his envious detractors to prey upon, and still leave sufficient for his own Fame, the good of the country and the cause of freedom.

—  
THE GOVERNOR OF NEW-YORK.

ACTUATED by the patriotic desire of exemplifying in his own person, that important maxim of Republican government, *rotation in office*, Governor Clinton, of New-York, has declined standing a Candidate for the chief magistracy of that state, at the approaching election. However highly we feel disposed to applaud an act, so much in unison with Mr. Clinton’s undeviating adherence to the principles of Liberty, and so congenial to the opinions and institutions of the American people;—yet we cannot refrain from expressing our deep regret, that he has in the exercise of the highest patriotism, deprived that state, and the country at large of the benefit of his services and his example. We sympathize sincerely, with the people of New York, at an event, which deprives them of the talents and paternal wisdom, of such a Governor as De Witt Clinton. The Country too, must suffer by his withdrawing himself, though but for a short period, from the sphere of public observation. There is a wholesome influence, even in the *example* of such a statesman, which spreads beyond the circle of his own immediate authority, and diffuses a sentiment, of virtue and patriotism, throughout the entire union. Such an example, is a potent restraint upon the evil dispositions of vicious and corrupted politicians. It gives a salutary bias to their conduct in despite of their perverted principles, and without their being conscious of its

influence, secretly and mysteriously inclines them, to a patriotic course of measures, and of policy. The example of New York, in regard to internal improvements, upon other states, and upon the National Government, is an emphatic illustration of this remark. The country and the people owe to him a debt of gratitude, which neither time nor confidence, can easily cancel; and it is upon such an occasion as the present, in the form of a valedictory essay, that we may be permitted to speak of him, as the future historian will hereafter depict his genius, his services, and his character.

Governor Clinton is every way worthy to adorn the brightest period of American history. That period, in our opinion was the epoch of the *Revolution*; when a galaxy of heroes, soldiers, and statesmen, illuminated the dawning hemisphere of a young nation, struggling in the throes of Liberty;—when the splendour of genius, science, and wisdom, conspired with the glowing achievements of war and conquest, to throw an effulgence of glory over our native land, which no future combination of circumstances will probably ever produce. It was then, Washington, Franklin, Jefferson, and Henry, beamed in all their vigour; in all the might, splendour, and majesty of genius.—A man, whose combined qualities can revive the glories of that period in their full lustre;—who can stand without disparagement, by the side of our consecrated and venerable fathers of freedom, in all their sternness of Roman virtue, and republican simplicity,—such a man, must possess a concentration of varied excellence, rarely united in the same person, and eminently worthy of the admiration, gratitude, and esteem of the country, that can boast him for a Citizen. Such a man, do we consider Governor Clinton, and such, we conceive, he must appear to the great body of the people.

The ancients, who estimated all patriots, highly qualified for government, as public property, never suffered an eminent statesman, to live for himself. The People adopted him for a father, on account of his genius, and his virtues; and invested him with power that they might enjoy the fruits of his wisdom and experience.

It was by acting up to this maxim, that this distinguished patriot was called by the voice of the people, to the government of the first State in the Union. Governor Clinton is surpassed by none, and equalled by few men in the country, for the extent of his views, and the variety of his learning. But what was originally political science in the closet, and the duty of a citizen, in private life, has now expanded into the practical wisdom of the Statesman, and the art of procuring for the people, the greatest possible mass of happiness and wealth. His unceasing vigilance, and active invention, are devoted to this great object. No man was ever more exalted above personal considerations, or less warped by the passions and interests of Faction. He thinks, toils, and acts, only for the public, without being conscious of a peculiar merit, although he cannot fail to perceive the superiority of his measures, in their happy and beneficent consequences. This modest reserve, is the distinguishing attribute of all great minds, and the prominent feature in the structure of Mr. Clinton's. Endowed with the highest faculties to grasp the concerns of a nation, he is only at home when promoting the public welfare. Nature has qualified him, in a peculiar manner, for the transaction of

public business on an enlarged national scale, abstracted from all minor circumstances, or petty interests. This may emphatically be termed his forte. Whatever the virulence of faction may have alleged to the contrary, he has no space in his mind for the intrigues of ambition, or the passions of a party. He has no sympathy for the selfishness of one section of Country, at the expense of the general welfare; and is equally blind to the influence of personal friendship, at the sacrifice of higher duties. No man ever felt less individual desire of aggrandizement; not even *Washington*, whom he most resembles, in profound sagacity, inflexible firmness, comprehensive views, and incorruptible integrity. The prosperity of the state is his highest ambition; and it is here that he has so identified himself with the public, as to cause a wide chasm, by his retirement, not only in his native state, but throughout the country. All his importance will not be perceived, till his absence has made the want of his abilities to be felt—and then it will be felt deeply and acknowledged universally.

It has never been doubted or denied by his greatest enemies, that Governor Clinton is gifted with transcendent genius; and that the several powers of his mind are admirably adjusted to produce vigorous action. His conception is rapid, and the powers of his imagination are equally brilliant and creative; while his judgment always vigorous, has been matured by habits of reflection and comparison, that never leave him at a loss to determine correctly. Capable of the most abstruse investigation, and patient or profound research, his mind is abundantly stored with the most precious fruits of science, so perfectly generalized by a powerful and expansive intellect, as to be constantly assuming new and beneficial forms of increased practical utility.

An active and inventive intellect, rich in knowledge, teeming with new combinations, and fraught with the innumerable embryos of imagination, as well as the more sober, but not less prolific deductions of Science, is not calculated to remain a passive, and silent observer of the world. Accordingly Mr. Clinton is an author of superior excellence. His style is lucid, fluent, nervous, and winning; while his method of intellectual development, and ratiocination is extremely perspicuous, and free from embarrassment: but the great charm of his style, is that native dignity of thought, which derives its chief beauty from truth and simplicity, causing him to reject the minor and frivolous ornaments of a rhetorician. This trait invests his composition with a real grandeur, and sober dignity, peculiarly happy in a Statesman, and excellently adapted to the discussions of a philosopher; in both which characters he shines with admirable and nearly equal lustre.

Happily for himself and his country, Governor Clinton is not, and never has been a Courtier;—a degraded, and monarchical character, which even our infant Republic, in the effervescence of passion, has so fruitfully generated from the mere offals of British influence, duplicity, ambition, and selfishness. It is also fortunate, that he has never been debauched by a residence at Washington (the *Court of St. James* in *Minature*;) in the character of a Representative, or a Senator; and equally fortunate is it, that he has never been an Ambassador abroad, at the Courts of Kings, or a pimp at home, under the auspices of a faction.—In such a man however, even the experience of Courts, would only excite disgust, and fortify him against contamination. In-



stead, therefore, of finding him disposed to flattery, he is frank, open, and sincere, without being offensive; and as he never cherishes thoughts, or designs, inimical to principles, and not wholly warranted by circumstances, he has no motives, much less the disposition, to act the part of a dissembler; a character so common in the present state of politics. Such a man cannot, under any circumstances, or vicissitude of events, become either a courtier or a hypocrite.

Open, honest, and ingenuous, Mr. Clinton is as delicate in honour, as he is above calumny. Having always been a strict Republican in principle, he has uniformly disclaimed all monarchical *mystery* in government; observing simplicity in the forms, as well as the substance of his official measures, being a rigid dispenser of prompt Justice, whose procrastination and delays, are among the worst evils of our Polity.

As an Orator, he is surpassed by few, who despising the glitter of epithet, florid conceits, affected exclamations, and far-fetched metaphors, repose on the genuine simplicity of natural eloquence, to enforce the beauty of truth. Not that he is wanting in fire or animation; for his fancy can dally with the lightest theme, or explore with the torch of genius, the most profound depths; or light up the passions, to bewilder and confuse the judgment. But his mind is of too sober honest and severe a cast, to often lead him into this playful dalliance with sophistry. When occasion demands it, however, he can assume any tone from gay to grave, from florid declamation, to serious argument; from biting sarcasm to poignant satire. The universality of genius, which can take any form, or shape, has long been observed; and Mr. Clinton is distinguished for a versatility of latent talent, which on proper occasions is exercised with the happiest effect, but it is generally repressed from the force of better judgment, and a taste for the higher orders of eloquence. In private life, his virtues are exemplary, his convivial qualities are captivating; and his goodness of heart universally esteemed and beloved.

If extraordinary genius, vast views, profound and various knowledge, stern republican principles;—an entire devotion to the Constitutional powers of government; an ardent love of his country, unimpeachable virtue, eloquent composition, a commanding power of speaking, an unshaken firmness of action, combine to constitute a statesman, Mr. Clinton may justly be ranked as the first ornament of his country. And yet these are but his abstract, we may almost say his negative qualities. As a *practical* Chief Magistrate he has shown himself possessed of talents that defy both competition and disparagement;—whether we consider the fertility of his invention—his perseverance, energy, enterprise, or indifference to the clamours of party, while promoting the means of internal improvement, and opening to the people of his native state, new and eternal sources of augmented wealth, comfort, and independence. With the characteristic fortitude of a great mind, he leans on the strength of his own conceptions, the grandeur of his designs, and the purity of his motives, for applause; convinced that the discerning of the present age, will always render him their tribute of gratitude and approbation, and assured of receiving from the verdict of posterity, the just award of Patriotism.

In viewing a statesman of such extraordinary endow-

ments, it is only a matter of regret, that abilities calculated for the wholesome government of a *Nation*, should be confined to the limits of a single state: and that that state is destined to lose for a time, the fruits of his genius—especially when we consider his entire devotion to the cause of National Industry, and his desire to see established on a just basis, a salutary system of Bankruptcy. Such a character is an honour to the age, that can appreciate an Aristides, a Fabius, and a Washington.

A statesman armed with the potent weapon of transcendent talent, like Mr. Clinton, has no propensity, and no motive, to follow the intricate windings, of the dirty and subterranean paths of intrigue. He conquers by the force of his genius and the virtue of Patriotism. His auxiliary is Truth—he follows virtue, and is sure always to command success in the end. Intrigue is but the art of deception, through the means of falsehood, hypocrisy, and treachery—a ladder whose ascending steps are composed of all the vices, by which little minds, too impotent to soar, climb over the head of talents, to unmerited power.

As the bees swarm to the most luscious flowers, to prey upon their sweets, so where excellencies so various concentrate to the adornment of a public character, malignity will be sure to gather round it, for calumny and despoliation. Instigated by the rancorous passions and narrow views of a party, opposition to such a man, is only calculated to gather slight and feeble tempests in the political atmosphere, not only harmless in themselves, but often salutary in their consequences; for bursting with an impotent explosion, they clear the hearts of the party for a time, and leave them sufficient serenity of mind, to contemplate with wonder that very greatness, which they in vain assail and never can destroy.

But the clouds of error, if they still exist, must at length break away from the public mind respecting Governor Clinton. The force of events, the resistless experience of time, must dispel the delusion from all, till the fogs engendered by party passions shall at last disperse, and present to the eyes of the whole American People the full effulgence of the character of their greatest Statesman. It is not only an improbable calculation, but it is an unnatural event, that such a character as De Witt Clinton, should long remain isolated from the political concerns of the Republic. The natural course of events, is seldom long obstructed by the force of violent passions—the current of a mighty stream may be impeded for a time, and its waters turned back; but the gradual accession of its waves will ultimately give it a new impulse; it then resumes its natural current, and with augmented power sweeps away every obstruction. It is literally impossible, that the People can much longer oppose the prejudices of a violent party, to the powerful qualifications of this great Republican. Nature creates our Destiny. Nature and education have fitted him for the task of government, in a wonderful degree. Nature, when she stamped his soul with benevolence, gave him an irresistible claim to our love and confidence; and when she endowed him with the powers of genius, softened by the sympathies of philanthropy, she gave him an undisputed title to govern that people, for whose happiness he has proved himself so strongly interested.

But we find we have already extended this article to unusual length. The theme has seduced us from our

original purpose; but we hope the reader will not regret the prolixity of the sketch, and the warmth of colouring, which our feelings of admiration for a retiring Patriot, have irresistibly elicited.

#### NATIONAL RETRENCHMENT.

THE excellent Report of the Committee on Retrenchment, submitted to the House of Representatives by Mr. Hardin, on the 15 current, cannot be too highly applauded for the soundness of its republican principles, and the salutary consequences likely to flow from its dissemination among the people. It is high time, that the American public became sensible of the deleterious and impoverishing effects of Loans, National Debt, pampered officers, useless sinecures, and all that host of destructive corruptions, which we have so fatuously and wickedly adopted, from the rotten system and policy of the British monarchy.—No American who loves his country, can ever desire to see us placed in that horrid extremity, to which such abuses have reduced that devoted country now gasping between a standing army, a stock-jobbing aristocracy, and a starving people. It is both surprising, and revolting to every good feeling, every virtuous principle, to find certain Journals in this city, attempting to controvert the propriety of paying off the arrearages of War, during a period of peace; and vainly striving to demonstrate the blessings of a large National Debt! Men who can lend themselves to a Patriotic order, to inculcate doctrines so radically erroneous, and widely destructive, would not hesitate to become the eulogists of every British abomination.—In the following observations of the Report, we may at one glance perceive the passions that lead to the creation of this Debt, and the arrogance and pride that would extenuate its evils, and perpetuate the curse upon the people. “A proud haughty Aristocracy” to use the words of the Report, is now the bane and pestilence of this country; and its chief support and nourishment, are derived from the *National Debt*, and the incorporation of those unconstitutional engines of pride and luxury, denominated *Banks*.—The Report contains this impressive and highly important passage, well worthy of repeated perusal, and frequent reflection.

“A National Debt creates, in the persons of the stockholders, a proud haughty aristocracy, in their manners extremely offensive, and ever destitute of that kind of patriotism and love of country that would sacrifice their pecuniary interest for that of the nation. It creates a body of men whose interest is separate and distinct, and at war with that of the great mass of the people, and who have an undue influence upon the administration of governments. The stock contributes nothing to the support of government, when every other kind of property does. The balance of the nation, as we see by an example in Great Britain, become the slaves, the hewers of wood and drawers of water, of the Stockholders. Already have the people of the United States paid to the stockholders on the score of interest, \$119,489,394 84.”

#### PENNSYLVANIA POLITICS.

THE politics of Pennsylvania exhibit a mingled character of apathy, incompetency, and discord, far from being cheering to the heart of the patriot. Long a helpless, and violated prey, to envenomed factions; long tost on the waves of selfish discord, at the mercy of unhallowed passions, and denied the means to develop her resources, improve her trade, and invigorate her exhausted strength; she at last enjoys repose without action, while the tumult of

party has given place, to the cautious and timid policy, of a feeble and selfish administration.

In every government, there is a wholesome spirit of party, which is the watchful sentinel of the public Interest. To stifle, or destroy this, is to purchase impunity for incapable, or faithless magistrates, at the sacrifice of the general welfare. It is the interest of an administration, that wants courage to assume the responsibility of government, or wisdom and foresight to plan that government well; to prostrate all party, and thus remove to a safe distance, or deprive of its force and potency, the animadversions, the complaints, and the just censure of offended patriotism. To deprive party of all its influence, is to remove completely, the controul of public opinion, over public measures, and the public servants.

The Executive of Pennsylvania has but too successfully accomplished, this selfish and pernicious aim.—By regulating his appointments to this purpose, he has confounded principles, character, services, qualifications, merit, with all their base extremes; the notorious rogue, and the honest citizen; the intelligent officer, and the doltish sycophant; the supporter of his election, and the calumniator who opposed him; have all, in their turn, been honoured by a commission. Party has not only been put out of the question, but rectitude, republicanism; all that constitutes the patriot, and elevates the friend of his country above the treacherous idolators of Foreign Despots.—Is such a course of policy, sanctioned by reason, by duty, by justice; does it denote wisdom, judgment, discrimination? Can such opposite characters equally promote the public welfare, or be qualified for the same office by reverse qualities?—The answer to these questions is—that such appointments are indicative of no other wisdom, or motives, than a sordid desire to allay animosity in every quarter; to disarm all censure; to prostrate all salutary party spirit, and by reducing all complaint, to individual discontent, render its murmurings inaudible, and its venom harmless.

Such a policy, obviously wants all that can confer character and dignity upon an Executive government. It shows the want of independence, of firmness, of sagacity, and of patriotism (for it is a short-sighted and baneful policy.) Destroying all respect for constitutional principles, it is an infraction upon a sacred duty of the Executive; it exhibits a debauched, as well as a selfish mind; it removes all emulation of virtue; and unhinges completely the entire system of political discrimination. It is a latitudinarian policy only worthy of a profligate prince.

We have said, it is a short-sighted and baneful policy even in respect to himself. It deprives the Executive of the support of a party, in the same manner, that it secures him from the attack of one. It converts the majority of all parties into foes; and makes only individual friends of the office-holders under him. It gives to his administration, a character of tameness, and pusillanimity, disgraceful to him, and more than disgraceful to the state, in relation to which it combines ignominy with evil.—In such a light will the future historian portray it, when parties shall have crumbled into dust; when passion shall cease to confuse the judgment; when complaint cannot be imputed to disappointment; and when the utter incapacity of the Executive, may perhaps no longer be a rumour, but a fact demonstrated according to the rules of science; when the



disciples of *Gall*, may point out the curves and lines of dullness, or pause, with wonder, upon the dubious prominencies, indicative of accidental elevation.

It may indeed be alleged, that although the appointments are not calculated to secure the Executive, the potent assistance of a party; yet that they may still prove beneficial to the State. But this suggestion is controverted by facts. The Executive does not possess the confidence, and cannot command the concurrence of a majority of the Legislature; without whose cordial co-operation, the wisest plans of public improvement must prove abortive. So that the People, by electing Representatives of contrary views and principles, have already passed sentence upon his incompetency. In this light, his pusillanimous policy is fraught with pernicious consequences to the whole state. Like an *incubus*, to use the forcible figure of Mr. Randolph, he paralyses all motion in the body politic; and with the characteristic vacillation of a feeble mind, he has neither courage to surrender himself implicitly to his advisers, nor sufficient sagacity, judgment, and knowledge, to act without them!

#### CITY ALDERMEN.

For a year past, there have been two vacancies in the bench of Aldermen of this city; and two more have occurred within the last six months. As *four* are now to be chosen, it is somewhat surprising that his Excellency, the Governor, does not issue their commissions, on the score of *safety*, if not of principle, or duty. He has now an opportunity, a glorious opportunity! to appoint two Federalists, and two Republicans. Then, who can growl? Who censure the wisdom of his Excellency?

Is there no obligation on the State Executive, to fill vacancies, in the most important offices of the State? Can he at pleasure, allow the city to be without four of her most important Magistrates, for any period, he deems proper?—In our opinion, he cannot thus neglect the public interest, without a violation both of his duty, and his oath of office.

For these four offices, his Excellency may have, say *forty* applications, from Federalists, Aristocrats, Democrats, Englishmen, and men of no party, and no principle—the double-faced dissemblers, who under the cloak of universal benevolence, study to advance their *own interests*, to the exclusion of every thing else.—Among the latter of these applicants, we remember a certain Discreet Friend of the *Deaf and Dumb*, who under the ostensive purpose of promoting that sacred charity, carried his *recommendation* for an Alderman's commission in his pocket, with the avowed design of becoming our Aristocratic Mayor—in case of succeeding. We recommend the gentleman to his Excellency. But perhaps his Excellency does not understand *irony*. In that case, we can assure him, that this gentleman is an excellent *balance-man*—that he has studied the art of *balancing* all his life; and has been so successful, as to have stood for years, with one foot on the steeple of the capital, and one on a castle in the air, without losing—*his balance*. We recommend him to his Excellency as a very excellent Tutor in the art of *balancing*.

P. S. Since the above was written, we perceive that Governor Hiestor has commissioned William Duane and Thomas Watson, as Aldermen of the City. This we are constrained to say, is a very good

*balance* appointment—a Republican and a Federalist. As evincive of the gratitude of the Governor to his immediate supporters, the appointment of these gentlemen certainly merits applause; especially when we consider how many men of equivocal principles, and how many Jesuits with two faces, and no hearts, were among the applicants. To the integrity, intelligence, and devotion to the public service of the persons chosen, we know of nothing, at present, which can form an objection. They are very *safe* appointments for his Excellency.

#### TRUTH IN CONGRESS.

When we hear such emphatic denunciations of corruption, as the following, made by a member, on the floor of Congress, what shall we think of the officers, who direct the machine of government; or of the People, who suffer with patience, so disgraceful a perversion of their liberties.

“Mr. Mitchell of South Carolina said, that looking over the documents which had been referred to, (*“the list of unsettled balances”*) he thought its CONTENTS WERE A DISGRACE TO THE GOVERNMENT, A LIBEL ON THE COUNTRY.”

What will be the consequences of such a declaration, it requires not much ingenuity to conjecture. The engines of government, will immediately be put in motion, to proscribe and denounce him; the libel will be ascribed to him; and he the cause of his country's disgrace. For such is the method, by which corruption shuffles of shame, and blinds the people to the vices of their rulers.

#### MEASURE FOR MEASURE.—THE PORT FOLIO.

“The time has been, that when the brains were out the man would die.”

BUT that time, gentle reader, has passed, and there stands the English Editor of the soporific *Port Folio*, as a living proof of the horrible fact. Observe reader how *pleasantly* he *smiles*; but it is the *smile* of the *Infuriated Maniac*. You have seen Street's Painting of that good natured personage. Then we need not describe him. Poor fellow! we heartily compassionate both his dullness and his anguish. Who would have thought he would have come to this. But he always entertained a secret dread of “falling into nought.” The times are now indeed ominous of his literary extinction, as they have before proved fatal to his mental sanity. The day light of Patriotism and genius begins to break upon the land, and objects of hideous deformity, before dimly perceived and mistaken for superior beings, or Deities of Wit, now appear in their real shapes and colours, “flat, dull, stale, and unprofitable;” mere shapeless masses of torpid conceit, or dusty rolls of antiquated parchment and English politics. We are not surprised, therefore, that the *God of Sleep*, has at last become revealed to the public eye, as the Editor of that apathetic journal too learned to be witty, and too profound to be facile. Half the town are already snoring in audible harmony, over the death-inducing pages of his Godship; especially that part of his work, devoted to a philippic against the *Columbian Observer*. But let the *Attorney General* look to the baneful and demoralising effects of such deep draughts of deadening opiates. The places of business are already forsaken; the streets are hinned as by a *pestilence*; every man is “snoring fast asleep” on the pillow of the *Port Folio*, so that to the hum of commerce has succeeded the solitude of the desert, while “even the fair and gentle portion of our inhabitants,” fade gently into fairy slumbers, in despite of the civet box, and flattering vial of his Godship, who wafts such killing perfumes from his wings. “I have such a tremor in my nerves, to day, cried the beautiful Saccarissa, as she placed her hand on her temples, I have such a head ache.—Do, Minny, bring me”—“The Cologne Water, ma'am, said Minny. “No you stupid, the—what d'y'e call it—the *Port Folio*. I think if I wrap one tightly round my head, its anodyne virtues will soon remove it.”—“Bless you, ma'am, I hope you will not wrap it round your head! Why 'twas but this morning I heard your father say, it was full of mendacity, obscenity, toryism, and impudence.” “Ignorant girl! you know not its virtues, answered her mistress—you know not Mr. Morpheus. He is a lover, a gallant, a sentimentalist.” Alas! poor Venus! wretched Cupid!

We are astonished Mr. Morpheus should have worked himself into so violent a passion, at our *playful* charge of Envy and toryism. Did he really think we were *serious*? He envious he a tory! No, no—all the

world knows better—besides your envious man never gets in a passion. *Willich* advises copious venesection, and a drastic cathartic, to a man exhausted with passion, spleen, envy, or malignity.—But the modesty of Mr. Morpheus would naturally revolt from such a remedy. By the way, we marvel a gentleman of his refinement, good manners, and high breeding, should give way to such ribaldry, and low abuse, which as well as his wit, would disgrace the *lowest Oyster Cellar of the Purlicus*—that he could thus

“Unpack his heart with words  
And fall a cursing like a very drab,  
A scullion!  
Fie upon’t! foh!”

And all for what! Because, forsooth, the good people of Baltimore once rewarded him for—not being an Englishman—in a very barbarous and cruel way.—And because his Toryism is now likely to bring him to the Pillory, or—the last and greatest of all human exaltations. For ourselves, we abhor all such summary proceedings, however well merited. We would always try a man by his peers, and we are certain that no American can be a peer to the English Editor of the *Port Folio*.

Is it not monstrous, that this author here,  
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,  
Could force his soul so to his own conceit,  
That, from her working, all his visage warm’d;  
Tears in his eyes, distraction in his aspect,  
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting  
With forms to his conceit? And all for nothing!

For his own *Envy*, which would have crushed our miserable little infant even in its embryo;—aye, even before it had seen the blessed light of this goodly world!—Is it not a scandal on the civil authorities, that this *Port Folio* should be permitted to defile the mansions of our citizens, by such ribaldry, toryism, and dullness.

A spanish song in the last No. of this transcendent work, deserves the attention of—the Attorney General, for its obscenity, and puerility. It concludes thus, after a nauseous and indelicate strain calculated to suffuse the cheek of modesty with crimson.

Haste, run, and fly  
From deadly blow!  
Haste, run, and fly  
In ring, or row.

Which is far surpassed in beauty, by the Children’s old ditty of

Ring a ring a rosy  
Sit upon a posey, &c.

It is however, high time to leave the Knight to his slumbers; merely observing as is our custom, that his abortive attempts to proscribe us, will always recoil upon his own head.—Rather than live the protracted life of dullness, to which fate has doomed his *nearly one quarter of a century old* book; he should valiantly seize, as he ought now to do, the *unsold elements* of his pages, and with a bag on his shoulder proudly promenade Chesnut Street with the cry of Rags!—Rags!—Rags!—“I’ll ne’er believe a madman till I see his brains,” says Shakespear; and so says the American public, to the wild ravings of this undigested mass of conceit, envy, and egotism. As to our own abilities, we never shall resort to the trite and dishonourable expedient so familiar with Mr. Morpheus, of puffing ourselves. As to his abilities, the public have already passed judgement upon them;—and since he has conducted the *Port Folio*, they have (as Dr. Johnson said of Macpherson,) ceased to be formidable. We keep no *Trumpeter* in pay. And no American, we think, will suffer such a work to contaminate his dwelling as the *English Port Folio*.

Altho’ “his brain is as barren as the banks of Libya,” still “he will lie, sir, with such volubility, that you would think truth were a fool.” Shakespear! We recommend to his profound attention, and bottomless learning, this verse of the Poet.

“Public hate  
Pursues the knave, and prove the *Tory’s* fate.”

To which at present, he appears perfectly indifferent, being contented to incur infamy at home and ridicule abroad, on condition that his work shall be criticised into existence and circulation. Where there is neither shame, virtue, nor wit left, the skull is scarcely worth the attention of the *phrenological society*.

—But hark! let us listen to his Prayer.  
Stung by remorse, to Nature’s laws resigned,  
Self-slaughter’s horrors rush upon my mind;

What tho’ an outcast, poor, unhous’d, disgrac’d,  
The Maker’s image by my wits defac’d;  
Supreme in wisdom, *Instinct* breathes within,  
Self dissolution is a deadly sin!—  
Far be the coward rashness from my thoughts  
Henceforth let years of *Penance* purge my faults,  
A safe *ASYLUM* the humane have given,  
And *MERCY* is an attribute of Heav’n!

#### VARIETY.

A Congress located in a desert—ten miles square. Tyberius in Caprea.—Is it fear, tyranny, vice, or all combined, that removes government from among the people; and dreads the influence of their opinions and their power! Would a *Patriotic Congress* fear to assemble in the heart of Philadelphia, encircled by the people’s love, and enlightened by their intelligence, knowledge, and wit.

A free people, observes a profound writer, who do not *abhor a King*, will be in danger of making one.

In Congress, Oratory means—all that can be said with a bad grace upon a barren subject; delivered in metaphors, strung together by sun beams, and dipt in the tints of the rainbow.

A faithful Representative in Congress, means, says a wag, a man of prudent reserve, who does not expose his shallowness; a parsimony of speech, so as not to offend the newspapers; a *genteel* deportment; a good bow at the Levee; an eager appetite for feasting; a complaisant judgment; an aptness for sly intrigue; and finally, the desertion of the cause of the People, for an appointment under government.

One of the laws of *Solon* ordained, that the citizen, who in a period of civil commotion, did not side with one or other of the contending parties, should *forfeit his estate*, and be forever banished the commonwealth.—A *Janus*, in politics being a public enemy.

#### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We have received several communications, of too personal a complexion to be admitted into our columns. We stand entirely on the *Defensive*, in our relations with our brethren of the Type; and we reserve to ourselves exclusively, the right of giving the *retort courteous*. We shall mete unto others, as they mete unto us; determined not to be put down, by supercilious arrogance, vulgar ribaldry, or erudite dullness.—

#### CONDITIONS.

I. To be published every Saturday morning, in eight quarto pages. Three dollars per annum, payable six months after subscribing, or 12 1-2 cents single numbers.

II. Subscriptions out of the city must be paid in advance.

III. Communications addressed to the Editors through the Post Office, must be post paid.

Should sufficient encouragement offer, the editors reserve the right to give a more extended form to the *Columbian Observer*, in which case a proportionate increase of price will be made.

Subscriptions and Communications received by HICKMAN & HAZARD, No. 121, Chesnut-Street, Philadelphia.